AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF

SCARBOROUGH,

ON THE

PROFANATION

OF

THE LORD's DAY.

I cannot ſuppoſe that *any* of you are ſo ignorant of the firſt principle of religion, as not to know there is a GOD, who made the world, and all things viſible, and inviſible, and that in him we live, and move, and have our being.—You muſt alſo, ſurely, be convinced that a GOD of infinite majeſty, wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, ought to be worſhipped and adored; and that all his commands ſhould be ſtrictly obeyed by his rational creatures.

No ſooner had the ALMIGHTY compleated his ſix days work of Creation, when all things ſtood up before him in beautiful order and harmony, than he, with infinite complacency, beholding the perfection of his works, bleſſed and ſet apart the *ſeventh* day; that, to the end of time, a *ſeventh* day, or a day in *ſeven*, might be kept as a day of holy reſt.

On this ſubject, the ALMIGHTY has fully revealed his will and pleaſure;—a *will*, not more expreſſive of the ſovereign Lord, than it is, of the kind and loving Father—The *Sabbath* was made for man, that, in it, he might reſt from labour, and do no manner of work, except that of neceſſity and mercy; but enjoy it, as a day of ſpiritual pleaſure and delight, in converſe with GOD, and laying up treaſure in heaven.—

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The inſtitution of the Sabbath is equally for the comfort and happineſs of the creature, as it is for the honour and glory of the CREATOR——GOD *ſanctified* the *ſeventh* day, *bleſſed*, and conſecrated it to his worſhip, and will never fail to *bleſs* thoſe who keep it holy—It is, indeed, a day highly diſtinguiſhed, and to be had in continual Remembrance, the LORD having paid the moſt ſolemn regard to it, throughout his holy word—Perhaps, it is in reference to this day, that *ſeven* is accounted a number of *perfection*;—that the clean beaſts were taken into the ark by *ſevens*;—that the emblems of the years of plenty and want in Egypt, were *ſevens*;—that the golden candleſtick had its *ſeven* branches;—that *ſeven* prieſts, with *ſeven* trumpets, went round the walls of Jericho, *ſeven* days, and *ſeven* times *ſeven*, on the *ſeventh* day.——There can be no doubt but the holy patriarchs were very ſtrict in keeping the *Sabbath-day*.——Before the promulgation of the *Law* from mount Sinai, we find an expreſs and particular charge to obſerve the *Sabbath-day*, in reſpect of gathering the manna--The people were to gather twice as much on the ſixth day, as they did on the other days, that they might obſerve the *reſt* of the *holy Sabbath* unto the LORD. When the *Law* was given; *one*, and the largeſt of all the ten commandments, was to ſecure the keeping of the *Sabbath-day holy*—It is delivered in words both poſitive and negative, prefixed with a ſolemn *memento*, and enforced by the ſtrongeſt arguments—Injunctions to obey, and threatenings to deter from diſobedience to this law, exceedingly abound in ſacred writ*—Under the *Law*, the man, who dared to tranſgreſs, was ſtoned to death, by the appointment of GOD—For the like offence, the Jewiſh nation was ſeverely puniſhed, even by the God of mercy. While the people kept his ſabbaths, they enjoyed his ſmiles, and were viſited with his bleſſings—Their weekly ſabbath was a day of holy delight--There ſabbatical

* See Exodus 31ſt. chapter 13th.--14th & 15th. verſes--Leviticus 26th.--chapter--Iſaiah 58th. chapter, 13th. & 14th. verſes; &c. &c.

ſabbatical year was a year of ſacred reſt; and, at the end of *ſeven* years, they enjoyed a *holy* Jubilee—But when, by repeated violations of this holy day, they had provoked the anger of the LORD, their land was made deſolate, and they were given up to a cruel captivity;—And, on account of their continued diſobedience to the divine command, and multiplied iniquities, they are, *now*, wretched outcaſts, exiled from their own country, and ſcattered over the face of the earth, a *byword* to the nations, and monuments of the execution of the judgments of GOD, upon the obſtinate tranſgreſſors of his holy laws.—Under the *New Teſtament* diſpenſation, we have not leſs neceſſity, nor do we lay under fewer obligations, to keep holy a day in *ſeven*—The language of the New Teſtament abounds with the number *ſeven*, probably, in honour of the Lord's day—We read of the *ſeven* candleſticks, *ſeven* ſpirits, *ſeven* ſtars, *ſeven* ſeals, *ſeven* trumpets, *ſeven* angels, *ſeven* thunders, *ſeven* vials, *ſeven* plagues, &c. &c. Alſo of receiving *ſevenfold*; and forgiving *ſeven* times, and *ſeventy* times *ſeven* times—Beſides, if the keeping of the Sabbath were needful for holy Adam, before he had loſt his original purity, it muſt ſurely be ſo for his degenerate poſterity—The reaſons annexed to the fourth commandment, are this day as binding as when the law was firſt given—If the Jews were to keep the ſabbath in commemoration of the works of creation, ſurely Chriſtians ſhould do it, not only in commemoration of that great event; but alſo of the ſtill ſuperior work of redemption, while at the ſame time, they anticipate the eternal reſt or Sabbath that remaineth for the people of GOD.*—In the ſacred duties of this day;—reading, hearing, ſinging, praying, and in meditation, we become more and better acquainted with GOD, and ourſelves, and with all things that belong to our peace—By a divine communion, we obtain ſpiritual food for our ſouls, from the author of our exiſtence, the fountain of beneficence, who filleth the hungry with good things, and ſendeth none of his faithful ſervants empty away—In fellowſhip with the Father, and

* See Hebrews, 4th. Chapter—9, and 10, Verſes

and his Son, Jeſus Chriſt, we enjoy that communion of ſaints, in which we profeſs to believe—We obtain ſtrength to ſupport us under the afflictions of life, and courage to meet and conquer the laſt and moſt formidable enemy—We are hereby taught and trained for a better world, and prepared for an eternal inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven.——

If GOD has honoured the *Sabbath day* with ſuch peculiar marks of diſtinction; and if it be fraught with ſuch tranſcendant bleſſings, how diſhonourable and degrading muſt the profanation of it appear in his ſight!——The violation of this holy day is a ſin of the moſt atrocious nature—It is an awful tranſgreſſion of the divine command, a daring inſult to GOD, a flagrant rebellion againſt the Majeſty of Heaven.——In a religious, a moral, and political light, the profanation of the ſabbath is the ſource of numerous evils; and thouſands have aſcribed their ruin to their violations of this *holy day*.—Becauſe of ſwearing and Sabbath-breaking, the land mourneth, and we are viſited with the judgments of an offended GOD.—

It is a melancholy truth, that in this age of infidelity and licentiouſneſs, the commands of GOD are openly tranſgreſſed, and his worſhip is greatly neglected—In *many places*, the *Sabbath*, or *Lord's Day*, has more the appearance of a *heathen feſtival* than a *chriſtian ſolemnity*—What ſhameful violations intrude upon the ſight, what dreadful execrations ſhock the ear, what diſſipation and wickedneſs abound upon this holy day!—Should a *Stranger to chriſtianity* enter our ſtreets on the Sabbath, and ſee the crowds, the vanity and diſſipation which abound on this holy day, he would be ſtruck with amazement—Should he enquire the cauſe of the tumult, and be told that this is a day of holy reſt, conſecrated by the God of Heaven for his ſolemn worſhip; and that it is kept in commemoration of the creation of the world, and of the redemption of man by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; he would be prejudiced againſt our holy religion, and think it was a medley of ſuperſtition, vanity, and folly.—

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The *Serious Chriſtian*, who has exalted ideas of the ſacred duties of this holy day, and a zeal for the honour of GOD, muſt be deeply affected with ſuch ſhameful profanations, and, in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, muſt exclaim, ſurely the fear of GOD is not in this place!——

Should the *Celeſtial Inhabitants* look down upon this lower world, and ſee the pollutions which prevail amongſt us, on this holy day, they would ſhroud their faces, and turn indignant from ſuch debaſing ſcenes.

The ALMIGHTY and ETERNAL GOD, whoſe eyes are over all the earth, views, from the throne of his Majeſty, the profanations of his holy day, by impious mortals—He ſees their pollutions and daring offences———He hears the voice of the blaſphemer, and the ſcoffs of the infidel; and a faithful record of every tranſgreſſion is kept in heaven, which will be unfolded, at the judgment of the laſt day, to the confuſion of every impenitent ſinner!——

Permit me, to expoſtulate more *particularly*, on the dreadful conſequences of the profanation of the LORD'S Day.——

Thoſe who conſume the hours of this holy day, in the pomp and pride of life, in vain amuſements and diſſipation, in gaming and licentiouſneſs; and, at the ſame time, boaſt of ſuperior rank and intelligence, of their liberal minds and cultivated underſtandings, muſt ſurely know that this day was ſet apart for more exalted purpoſes;—that it is a day of holy reſt, and was conſecrated for the worſhip of GOD, who has given them all things richly to enjoy, and viſited them with a profuſion of bleſſings:—How then will they be able to anſwer for ſuch a waſte of ſacred moments,—ſuch a *killing* of holy time—ſuch baſe ingratitude, at the tribunal of heaven!———

Thoſe who pollute this holy day, in ſcenes of riot and intemperance, in ſwearing and drunkenneſs, debaſing themſelves even below the beaſts which periſh:—How will they lift up their heads in the preſence of a holy God, when they are ſummoned to the bar of his judgment!---What agonizing remorſe muſt ſeize their ſouls, when they behold the ſaints of God, who have reverenced his ſanctuary, and hallowed his ſabbaths, exalted to thrones of glory, while they are conſigned to the dark manſions of eternal torment and deſpair!— Thoſe

Thoſe who are not ſo openly profane; but, at the ſame time waſte this ſacred day in ſloth and indolence, or in ſports and paſtimes, which they call innocent recreations:—How can they, who thus proſtitute a day of holy reſt and ſolemn worſhip, hope for the bleſſing of God, in ſuch a ſhameful abuſe of his divine command! It is vain to ſuppoſe that ſuch as neglect the ordinances of God, and the places of his worſhip on earth, can be admitted into his courts in heaven, to celebrate his praiſes, and enjoy a ſabbath of eternal reſt and felicity.——

Some, perhaps, may ſay that the labour and fatigue of ſix days, require reſt and recreation on the *ſeventh*; but, how many engage in exerciſes and amuſements, on this day, more toilſome than their daily labour!—The *Sabbath* is a day of *holy* reſt and refreſhment in the *Lord*—The ſoul of man cannot enjoy a more exalted degree of *recreation*, than in viſiting the courts of the houſe of the LORD, and joining the congregation in praiſing that GOD, from whom all bleſſings, ſpiritual and temporal, in rich abundance flow—Be perſuaded my friends, to try the experiment, and you will find more reſt and refreſhment to your ſouls and bodies, in ſuch heavenly employment, than in the midſt of all the amuſements and vanities of the world—And you will be conſtrained, by ſweet experience, to declare, that a day in the courts of GOD is better than a thouſand; and that you had rather be a door-keeper in the houſe of your GOD, than to dwell in the tents of wickedneſs.——

How delightful is it to ſee the ſaints of GOD, aſſembled in his houſe, in bleſſed communion, on the LORD's Day! What a ſweet anticipation of the joy of heaven, to hear their united praiſes!—On the contrary, how painful is it to behold the multitudes in purſuit of vain amuſements, on this holy day, while the places of GOD's worſhip are almoſt deſerted!—The population of this town is more than ſeven thouſand ſouls—But, the whole of the collective congregations, of every denomination, for the worſhip of GOD, on the LORD's Day, *frequently*, do not exceed one tenth of that number!—What an awful conſideration!—

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As EXAMPLE is ſometimes more forcible than precept, it may not be improper to addreſs thoſe in the higher ſtations of life, to ſhew the dangerous conſequences of *their* neglecting the worſhip of GOD, and profaning the LORD'S DAY—The man of ſuperior rank and fortune, who lives in the open violation of the Sabbath, contributes, by his *example*, to deſtroy all reverence for this holy day, to diſhonour the ALMIGHTY, to ſubvert the order of ſociety, and to introduce a train of fatal evils—*He* is an enemy to GOD, to himſelf, his family, and country, to his own ſoul, and the ſouls of his fellow-creatures.

The world is, at preſent, in a ſtate of awful convulſion—The Lord is riſen out of his place, to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity—The devouring ſword and the ſweeping peſtilence are thinning the people; and war, with its horrors, ſpreads a gloomy ſhade over the face of the earth—In the midſt of theſe awful ſcenes, wickedneſs increaſes, and the people, let looſe from the principles of piety, and the reſtraints of religion, ſeem haſtening to an extreme degradation, and a total diſſolution of morals—Infidelity and licentiouſneſs, with every ſpecies of ſinful intemperance, pervade the different claſſes of ſociety—The word of GOD is rejected by ſome, as a cunningly deviſed fable; and the eſſential doctrines of chriſtianity are deemed, even by many profeſſing chriſtians, as the flights of enthuſiaſm—True piety is diſcountenanced, & vice, emboldened by numbers, bids defiance to the laws of GOD--And yet *we* are ſpared!—It is of the Lord's mercies that our land is not deluged with blood, and that we are not utterly conſumed by war, famine, and the ſword—It is of *his* mercies, that, amidſt the convulſions and wreck of nations, we ſtill are in the peaceful enjoyment of our civil and religious liberties, and that the ſweet ſound of the ſilver trumpet of the Goſpel is heard in the land.——The ALMIGHTY, who rides in the whirlwind, has ſuſpended its impetuoſity, and prevented it from burſting on our heads--He has been a wall of ſalvation around us, to protect us from hoſtile invaſion, and has reſtrained the fury of the adverſary.——When we compare the bounties of the LORD with our national ingratitude,

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we muſt be conſtrained to acknowledge, that it is of his mercies, we are not conſumed. Amidſt the gloom with which we are ſurrounded, it is a conſolation to the ſerious chriſtian to be aſſured, that. from the depth of confuſion & darkneſs, GOD will bring order and light; and that his overruling providence, in the courſe of his myſterious diſpenſations, will eſtabliſh the reign of religion, and the kingdom of CHRIST and his Righteouſneſs, in ages of peace—The light of heaven will burſt through the ſurrounding gloom. After a night of darkneſs, the ſhades will be diſperſed, and true religion will ſhine forth in all its purity and luſtre—Sooner may the ſun be arreſted in its courſe in the firmament, than the Goſpel be impeded in its progreſs, by the feeble attempts of daring men—But, the end is not yet, & before the appearance of theſe brighter days, it would ſeem, from the prophecies of ſcripture, that there will be ſcenes of great tribulation, and that the world muſt be purified from its droſs, in the furnace of affliction.——

In this age of boaſted reaſon and philoſophy, *many* will treat theſe opinions, as the dreams of enthuſiaſm, or viſionary ideas, pictured by ſuperſtition, upon a credulous mind. —Where, ſay the wiſe men of the world, is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*— But, the wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with GOD; and, if we believe the Scripture, we muſt be aſſured that GOD has, in a wonderful manner, interpoſed in the government of the world;--that RIGHTEOUSNESS exalteth a nation, and INIQUITY is the cauſe of deſtruction;—that the Almighty acts by the ſtandard of his own infinite wiſdom, in pulling down one kingdom and raiſing up another, and frequently accompliſhes his purpoſes, in a way diametrically oppoſite to the conception of *human* wiſdom and policy.

Oh! the depths of the wiſdom and knowledge of GOD! how unſearchable are his judgments and his ways paſt finding out! for of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever! Amen.

Scarborough, March, 1799.

J. H.

* Peter, II. 3. Chap.---4 Verſe.

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